NITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations regular budget ran out of cash in mid-August, Administrative and Budgetary Committee is told; Secretary-General implements several cost-cutting measures.

* Secretary-General to visit China in March 1996 at invitation of Chinese Government.

* Gertrude Mongella says women have come to Fourth World Conference on Women not as victims but as problem solvers.

* NATO continues air operations over Bosnia in clear weather; UNCRO reports Croatian Army build-up in Sectors North and South, with troop movements towards Bosnian border.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNOMIL mandate until 31 January 1996; deploys 42 extra observers to monitor cease-fire and disengagement of forces in Liberia.

* Japan pledges $18 million for UNRWA's 1995 regular programme and Peace Implementation Programme.

* UNESCO appoints German racing driver Michael Schumacher as Special Envoy for Education and Sports.

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The regular budget of the United Nations ran out of cash in mid-August, and has had to borrow around $98 million from peace-keeping operations, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, Joseph Connor, said today. He told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) that Member States now owed the Organization more than $3.7 billion in assessments. Unless significant contributions were made, the regular budget would have to borrow almost $200 million by the end of October, and nearly $300 million by the end of November.

The financial situation was particularly bleak this year as the amounts involved were unprecedented, Mr. Connor continued. Furthermore, the payment

from one major contributor was expected to be made much later this year than in previous years. As a result, the United Nations had been unable to reimburse troop-contributing countries. It owed about $900 million to Member States for troops and equipment; if the situation continued, the amount owed could exceed $1.2 billion by the end of the year.

The Secretary-General had taken some immediate steps to conserve cash, Mr. Connor noted. They included a freeze on recruitment; severe limits on overtime and staff travel; suspension of new consultancies and purchases of equipment; delay in payments to vendors; and monthly payment of professional salaries. Further measures were being considered, some of which would have to be approved by Member States. He stressed, however, that those measures could not substitute for full payment of assessments by Member States.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has accepted an invitation from the Chinese Government to visit China in March 1996. The Secretary-General had planned to visit Beijing from 2 to 6 September, during which he would have held meetings with Chinese leaders and opened the Fourth World Conference on Women. However, he was unable to make that visit due to a severe attack of influenza.

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The Fourth World Conference on Women is on track and should end, as scheduled, on Friday with the adoption of the draft platform for action, Conference Secretary-General Gertrude Mongella said today. She stressed that women were not addressing the Conference as victims, but had come to Beijing armed with strategies for solving problems. Meanwhile, delegates involved in negotiations on the draft reported considerable progress on the issue of women's health, including references to sexual rights and punitive measures for illegal abortion.

Yesterday, Dorothy Blake of the World Health Organization (WHO) told the Conference that HIV/AIDS was now spreading fastest among women. Speaking as a co-sponsor of the United Nations inter-agency programme on HIV/AIDS, she warned that an estimated 16 million women would be infected with the disease by the year 2000. Education was the most important aspect of prevention, she stressed.

K. Burke Dillon of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that economic adjustment programmes -- particularly those involving agriculture and opening up markets for small and micro enterprises -- had often been of direct benefit to women. Adjustment programmes could also benefit women and children through redirecting public expenditure. The IMF consistently urged

governments to reduce unproductive expenditure, including military spending, and redirect it towards education, health and nutrition.

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) today continued air operations over Bosnia and Herzegovina in clear weather, according to a United Nations spokesman. There was no change in the situation on the ground around Sarajevo, where 348 firing incidents were recorded yesterday. The Bosnian Serbs continued to deny the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) access to a hospital west of the city which they alleged had been shelled by the Rapid Reaction Force on Friday.

Meanwhile, the situation was quiet in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) mission area. However, UNCRO noted a Croatian Army build-up in Sectors North and South, and significant troop movements towards the Bosnian border.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 January 1996, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 9 September, he said the prospects for peace in Liberia were better now than they had been at any time since the outbreak of the civil war. The timely implementation of the cease-fire and the installation of the Council of State indicated a renewed commitment by the Liberian parties to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Meanwhile, a new spirit of cooperation seemed to have emerged between the parties and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The parties must continue to demonstrate their commitment to peace through concrete deeds, the Secretary-General continued. They should make every effort to complete the disengagement, assembly, disarmament and demobilization of their forces. Should they fail at any time to fulfil their commitments under the Abuja Agreement, the Security Council would be invited to reconsider UNOMIL's involvement in the peace process. While success in that process depended primarily on the goodwill of the parties, the international community should help put Liberia on the path to recovery.

The Secretary-General said he intended to immediately increase UNOMIL's military component by 42 observers to enable it to monitor the cease-fire and the disengagement of forces. Meanwhile, the Mission would continue to work with the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) on the adoption of a joint concept of operations. That concept would include measures to enhance cooperation between UNOMIL and ECOMOG and to enable them to carry out their respective roles more effectively.

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Japan has pledged $18 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The pledge includes $11 million for the Agency's regular programme in 1995, $500,000 for university scholarships for refugee students, and $6.5 million for the Peace Implementation Programme (PIP).

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has appointed German racing driver Michael Schumacher as its Special Envoy for Education and Sports. Mr. Schumacher is the second famous sports star to be named to an honourary function at UNESCO. The Brazilian soccer player Pele (Edson Arantes do Nascimento) was appointed UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in 1994.

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